

CALL FOR PAPERS

Advancing cross-border payments: identifying opportunities and challenges for sub-Saharan Africa

The Bank for International Settlements' Committee on Payments and Market Infrastructures (CPMI) [monitors](#) the development and implementation of payment system improvements for enhanced cross-border payments. Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) shows progress and ongoing efforts in the areas of payment system interoperability, harmonisation and extension. However, these changes have yet to translate into measurable improvements for end users.

The [key performance indicators \(KPIs\) reported](#) by the Financial Stability Board (FSB) show that in SSA both wholesale and retail cross-border payments are relatively slow, with only 54% of wholesale payments and 42% of retail payments reaching the intended recipient within an hour (the target is 75%). Additionally, retail payments and remittances continue to incur high costs. This lag between payment system infrastructure improvements and noticeable changes in the user experience is attributed to the natural time required for modernising payment systems to fully affect end user outcomes.

Accurate, granular, timely and accessible information is critical for measuring progress in enhancing cross-border payments. Increasing market intelligence and enhancing insights on the SSA region will help to identify region-specific challenges and opportunities. A better understanding of the root causes affecting cross-border payments in the region will help to make an informed decision on who would be best positioned to lead the work at domestic and regional levels.

Call for research contributions

The South African G20 Presidency and the CPMI invite submissions of papers and original works that provide deeper insights into cross-border payments data and explore potential new data sources. While the primary focus is on the SSA region, the findings will inform ongoing and future work in other regions as well. The G20 South African Presidency and the CPMI will invite authors of selected submissions to present their work at a conference to be held in the second half of 2025.

The objective of the conference is to identify practical approaches to improve key payment corridors to and from SSA, with the potential for similar exercises in other regions facing unique cross-border payment challenges.

Areas of interest

The G20 South African Presidency and the CPMI invite submissions from a diverse range of contributors, including academia, public institutions (including central banks), special interest groups and the private sector. Papers should present empirical and analytical research on a variety of topics. Areas of interest include, but are not limited to, analysis of:

- quantitative and qualitative information at the corridor and regional levels involving SSA countries (eg payment values and volume, informal channels);
- factors influencing end user options and choices for cross-border payments in SSA (eg informal economy, documentary requirements, inflation, financial health, digital inclusion); and

- elements determining and affecting supply-side conditions in cross-border payments to and from jurisdictions in SSA (eg fast payments adoption, foreign exchange controls and liquidity, manual reporting and compliance processes, corresponding banking relationships).

Submission guidelines and selection process

All submissions should be in English. Each submission should include the name and email address of a corresponding author. Extended abstracts of around 1 000 words are accepted; full papers are encouraged. The deadline for submissions of extended abstracts/papers is **1 June 2025**. Please send your papers in PDF format via email to the contact information provided below.

The South African Reserve Bank, the CPMI Secretariat and selected CPMI members leading the cross-border payments work will review the relevance, quality and originality of all submissions. The authors will be informed by the end of **June 2025** whether their submissions have been accepted. If a paper is accepted for presentation and discussion at the conference, the authors must submit a final draft of the paper no later than 31 August 2025. Authors should also agree to consider revisions of their papers based on the discussion at the conference and allow the BIS to publish the papers in some form.¹ This will not entail any transfer of copyright and will not pre-empt later publication in a field journal.

Conference

Selected papers will be discussed at a conference in September/October 2025 (exact date and venue to be determined), bringing together stakeholders from the public and private sectors. The outcome of the conference should inform implementable actions to improve the data quality of cross-border payments, particularly in SSA and other corridors and regions that need the most attention in improving cross-border payments data.

Important dates and logistical details

- **Submission deadline:** 1 June 2025
- **Notification of review results:** 30 June 2025
- **Submission of final papers:** 31 August 2025
- **Conference:** September/October 2025 (exact date and venue to be determined)
- **Contact information:** For further details and to submit papers, please contact cpmi@bis.org and SAG20Presidency.Payments@resbank.co.za.

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